
Manner: NATURAL

A death that is classified as natural comes under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner because of the sudden and unexpected nature of the death, because there is no physician who has knowledge or awareness of the decedent's condition, or when circumstances surrounding death arouse suspicion. In these situations, the Medical Examiner becomes responsible for certification of death. It should be stressed that the natural deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner are not representative of all natural deaths in the general population, because these jurisdictional considerations introduce a significant sampling bias.

In 2000, there were 524 deaths attributed to natural causes that came under the jurisdiction of the King County Medical Examiner, representing 35% (524/1,506) of the cases investigated. Seventy-nine percent (416/511) of these deaths were certified by the King County Medical Examiner, and 21% (108/524) were certified by attending physicians who had knowledge of the decedent's medical condition. Autopsies were performed in 72% (298/416) of the deaths certified as natural by the King County Medical Examiner, which includes autopsies performed in all 19 deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The data presented in this section are derived from the 524 natural deaths under the King County Medical Examiner's jurisdiction. Cardiovascular disease accounted for the greatest proportion of natural deaths. Most deaths in which an autopsy was not performed were certified as due to "probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease".

Table 5-1 Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 2000

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
CARDIOVASCULAR	
4	Aortic aneurysm/Dissection
127	Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
1	Cardiac dysrhythmia
7	Cardiomyopathy
1	Congenital heart disease
1	Coronary Artery Dissection
32	Hypertensive ASCVD / Hypertensive heart disease
9	Other
130	Probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
4	Valvular heart disease
316	TOTAL CARDIOVASCULAR
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM	
12	Epilepsy (idiopathic & other non-trauma etiologies)
2	Cerebrovascular incident(s)
3	Other
1	Seizure disorder
17	Spontaneous intracerebral hemorrhage
6	Spontaneous rupture of aneurysm
1	Subarachnoid hemorrhage
42	TOTAL CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM
ENDOCRINE	
4	Diabetic ketoacidosis
5	Diabetes Mellitus
1	Hypernatremia
10	TOTAL ENDOCRINE
GASTROINTESTINAL	
2	Bacterial peritonitis
3	Obstruction
3	Perforating ulcer
2	Other
10	TOTAL GASTROINTESTINAL

Table 5-1 (Cont..) Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 2000

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
HEPATIC	
1	Cirrhosis and Fatty liver
8	Cirrhosis
1	Other
2	Hepatitis
1	Heptic Failure
13	TOTAL HEPATIC
MALIGNANCY	
13	TOTAL MALIGNANCY
OTHER PROCESSES	
22	Chronic ethanolism
7	HIV / AIDS
3	Infection
4	Necrotizing Fascitis
6	Sepsis
16	Other
58	TOTAL OTHER PROCESSES
RESPIRATORY	
2	Asthma
20	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
8	Pneumonia
8	Pulmonary thromboembolus
19	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
5	Other
62	TOTAL RESPIRATORY
208	TOTAL Non-cardiovascular Cause of Death
316	TOTAL Cardiovascular Cause of Death
524	Total NATURAL DEATHS under KCMEO Jurisdiction, 2000

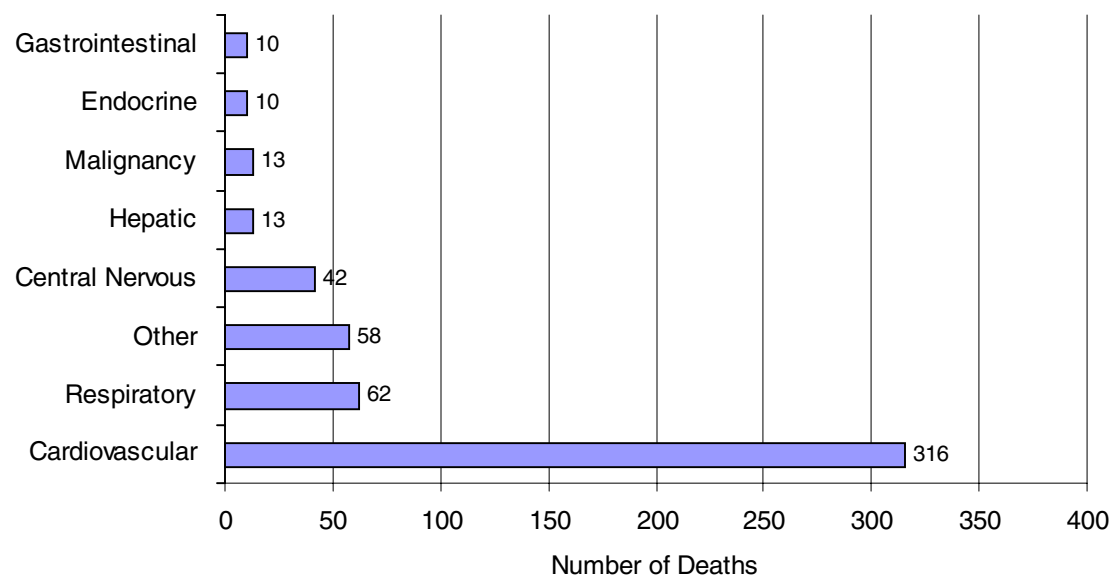
Graph 5-1 Deaths Due to Natural Causes in 2000

Table 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent

DISEASE PROCESS/ GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Cardiovascular	272	20	16	6	2		316
<i>Male</i>	179	16	13	4	2	214	
<i>Female</i>	93	4	3	2	0	102	
Respiratory	50	6	5	0	1		62
<i>Male</i>	30	3	3	0	1	37	
<i>Female</i>	20	3	2	0	0	25	
Other	49	3	2	0	4		58
<i>Male</i>	37	3	1	0	2	43	
<i>Female</i>	12	0	1	0	2	15	
Central Nervous	30	6	4	0	2		42
<i>Male</i>	19	4	3	0	0	26	
<i>Female</i>	11	2	1	0	2	16	
Hepatic	11	0	1	1	0		13
<i>Male</i>	10	0	1	1	0	12	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Malignancy	12	0	1	0	0		13
<i>Male</i>	10	0	1	0	0	11	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Undetermined	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Endocrine	9	1	0	0	0		10
<i>Male</i>	5	1	0	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Gastrointestinal	8	0	1	0	1		10
<i>Male</i>	6	0	1	0	1	8	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Total	441	36	30	7	10		524
Percent	84	7	6	1	2		

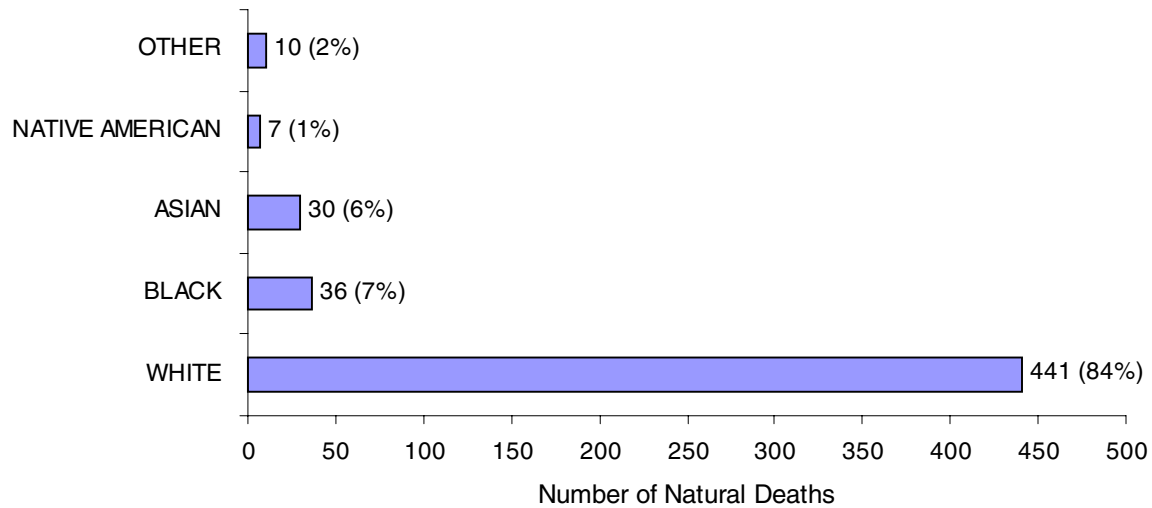
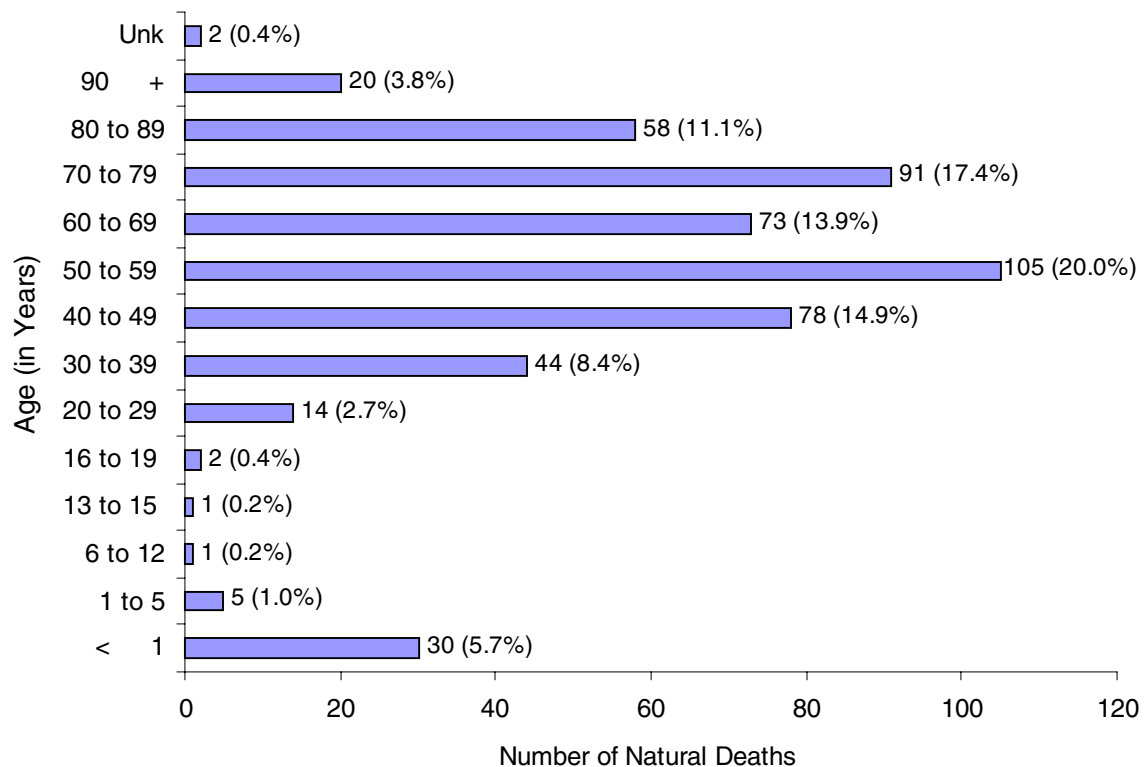
Graph 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent**Graph 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent**

Table 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent

METHOD/ GENDER	AGE GROUP (YEARS)														SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +	U n k		
Cardiovascular	0	1	0	1	1	3	24	39	60	55	69	44	19	0		316
Male	0	1	0	1	0	1	21	30	50	41	40	25	4	0	214	
Female	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	9	10	14	29	19	15	0	102	
Respiratory	20	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	10	8	8	6	1	0		62
Male	10	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	8	7	5	2	0	0	37	
Female	10	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	3	4	1	0	25	
Other	6	1	0	0	0	2	10	17	15	2	1	2	0	2		58
Male	4	0	0	0	0	2	8	12	13	2	0	1	0	1	43	
Female	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	2	0	1	1	0	1	15	
Central Nervous	2	1	1	0	0	8	3	6	9	4	5	3	0	0		42
Male	0	1	0	0	0	5	2	4	6	3	3	2	0	0	26	
Female	2	0	1	0	0	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	0	0	16	
Hepatic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	2	0	1	0	0		13
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	2	0	1	0	0	12	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Malignancy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	6	1	0	0		13
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	4	1	0	0	11	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
Undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Endocrine	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	1	1	0	0		10
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	
Female	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	
Gastrointestinal	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	0		10
Male	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Female	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Total	30	5	1	1	2	14	44	78	105	73	91	58	20	2		524
Percent	5.7	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	2.7	8.4	14.9	20.0	13.9	17.4	11.1	3.8	0.4		

Table 5-4 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Gender of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES	Gender		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Cardiovascular	214	102	316
Respiratory	37	25	62
Other	43	15	58
Central Nervous	26	16	42
Hepatic	12	1	13
Malignancy	11	2	13
Undetermined	0	0	0
Endocrine	6	4	10
Gastrointestinal	8	2	10
Total	357	167	524
Percent	68.1	31.9	